

# Threatened and Endangered Species in Forests of Wisconsin

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# WESTERN SLENDER GLASS LIZARD

(*Ophisaurus attenuatus*)

Federal Status: Not Listed

State Status: Endangered



**Description:** The western slender glass lizard resembles a snake more than a lizard, with its pointed snout, narrow head, and a long cylindrical body with no limbs. Unlike a snake, this lizard has eyelids and external ear openings. The western slender glass lizard averages 18 to 24 inches in length. It is usually brown or tan, with a dark brown or black stripe running down the middle of its back from head to tail. Also, two dark stripes run above and four narrow stripes run below the lateral groove (a groove along the side of the animal). The underside of the lizard is white to light yellow. When caught, the lizard will often shed its tail to escape.

**Habitat:** This lizard's preferred habitat is oak savannas and open oak woodlands and adjacent mesic (moist) prairies. It is also found in sand prairies, abandoned agricultural fields and pine barrens.

**Forestry Considerations:** Plantings of pine and Christmas trees in prairies, or underplantings in oak savannas and open woodlands result in a loss of critical slender glass lizard habitat.

However, forestry cutting may add habitat for this species. Managing to maintain a mosaic of different open or early-age classes of trees may help perpetuate this species on a landscape scale. Developed forest roads (roads containing no vegetation, whether paved or not) represent a formidable

movement barrier to these lizards, leading to increased mortality from predators and vehicle traffic. Minimizing forest roads can benefit this lizard.

